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No 408

## CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

The bells are ringing, clear and sweet,  
Beneath the adoring ang'ls' feet,  
And in our hearts are glad thoughts born  
By joyous voices of gladness born.  
Born in a manger, poor and low,  
Was born the Christ-child, years ago,  
And shepherds, on the hills afar,  
Were told the tidings by a star.

Oh, ring, glad bells, ring loud and sweet,  
The song which ages shall repeat,  
While we sing on Christmas still,  
Of Peace on Earth, to Men Good Will.

Oh, Christ-child, in a manger born,  
The stars sung on thy birthday-morn,  
While, or died on thy mother's breast,  
The wise men sought thy place of rest,  
And peace descended on the earth,  
In honor of thy holy birth.  
Ah, the world died for us, and them  
Who hailed the king of Bethlehem,  
Oh, ring, glad bells, ring loud and sweet,  
The song which ages shall repeat,  
Which angels sang on Christmas still,  
Of Peace on earth, to Men Good Will.

Oh, song, a-down the centuries rolled,  
Oh, song, which never can grow old!  
Oh, Christ-child, born a cross to bear  
That we at last, a crown might wear  
Let us like angels to the earth descend,  
Bring love, as tribute-offering meet,  
And worship there, while angels sing  
In praise of Jesus Christ, our king.

Oh, ring, glad bells, ring loud and sweet,  
The song which ages shall repeat,  
While angels sang on Christmas still,  
Of Peace on Earth, to Men Good Will.

## Wife or Widow?

OR,

ETHELIND ERLE'S ENEMY.

BY RETT WINWOOD,

AUTHOR OF "A GIRL'S HEART," "A DANGEROUS WOMAN," "THE WRONGED HEIRESS," ETC.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE FIRST BRIDAL EVE.

What do you think of marriage?

I take it as those that deny purgatory;

It looks like containing a heaven or hell;

There is no third place in it!—WEBSTER.

A MYSTICAL stir was in the house. Beautiful curtains draped hall and corridor, and flanked the grand central staircase with bud, blossom and arches of living green. The air seemed heavy with the perfume of violets and heliotrope, and at the far end of the spacious drawing-room hung the traditional marriage-bell, pure, perfect and stainless as though fairy fingers had fashioned and suspended it.

It was Ethelind Erle's wedding-eve. Glen-oaks, the lovely country-seat of her guardian, Colonel Philip Falkner, had been profusely decorated for the occasion. Most of the guests were already in the house, making the scene brilliant with their rich toilettes and glittering jewels.

The windows stood wide open, their hangings of delicate lace swaying gently in the soft May breeze that crept up from the placid bosom of the bay. The moon stood trembling on the eastern horizon, as if eager yet half-afraid to pour its pearl-white flood over the slumbering hills and valleys and the waiting tide that washed the sand-sid and below. Fair as a dream of Eden was the scene.

Before a cheval-glass in one of the upper chambers stood Dolores Gleyne. She was to be bride-maid, and wore the traditional white; but her olive complexion and usually ruddy cheeks looked quite ghastly in the brilliant light that pervaded the room. In her shaking fingers she held a scented note.

"Come to me in the conservatory, Dolores," it said. "You can steal away easily enough in the crowd. I must see you alone, and this may be our only opportunity." VINCENT.

The young girl crushed the note impatiently in her hand.

"I must go," she murmured. "Vincent might do something reckless if I refused to see him. But it is very wrong to meet him clandestinely after the promise grandpa extorted from me."

Catching up a shawl that lay on one of the chairs, she flung it over her shoulders and stepped to the door. There was noise and bustle enough in the lower rooms, but the corridor seemed deserted; and with a quick-drawn breath she flitted down the broad passage.

Near the landing was a small alcove curtained with crimson damask. Just as Dolores passed this recess, an arm was suddenly thrust out from the drapery, and she felt herself drawn forcibly forward.

"Is it you, darling?" breathed a low, musical voice.

Dolores drew back with a startled exclamation.

"Raymond—you here!" she uttered, glancing into the dark handsome face so close to her own. "You frightened me dreadfully."

The hand fell from her arm.

"I beg your pardon, dear cousin," said the young man, in a cool, chary voice. "These halls are so confoundedly dark that I mistook you for Egmont. Why don't you come stealing upon me muffled up like that?"

"I have an errand down-stairs, and my white dress seemed so conspicuous."

"Where did you leave Miss Erle?"

"She is still in her chamber, I suppose. Have you any message for her?"

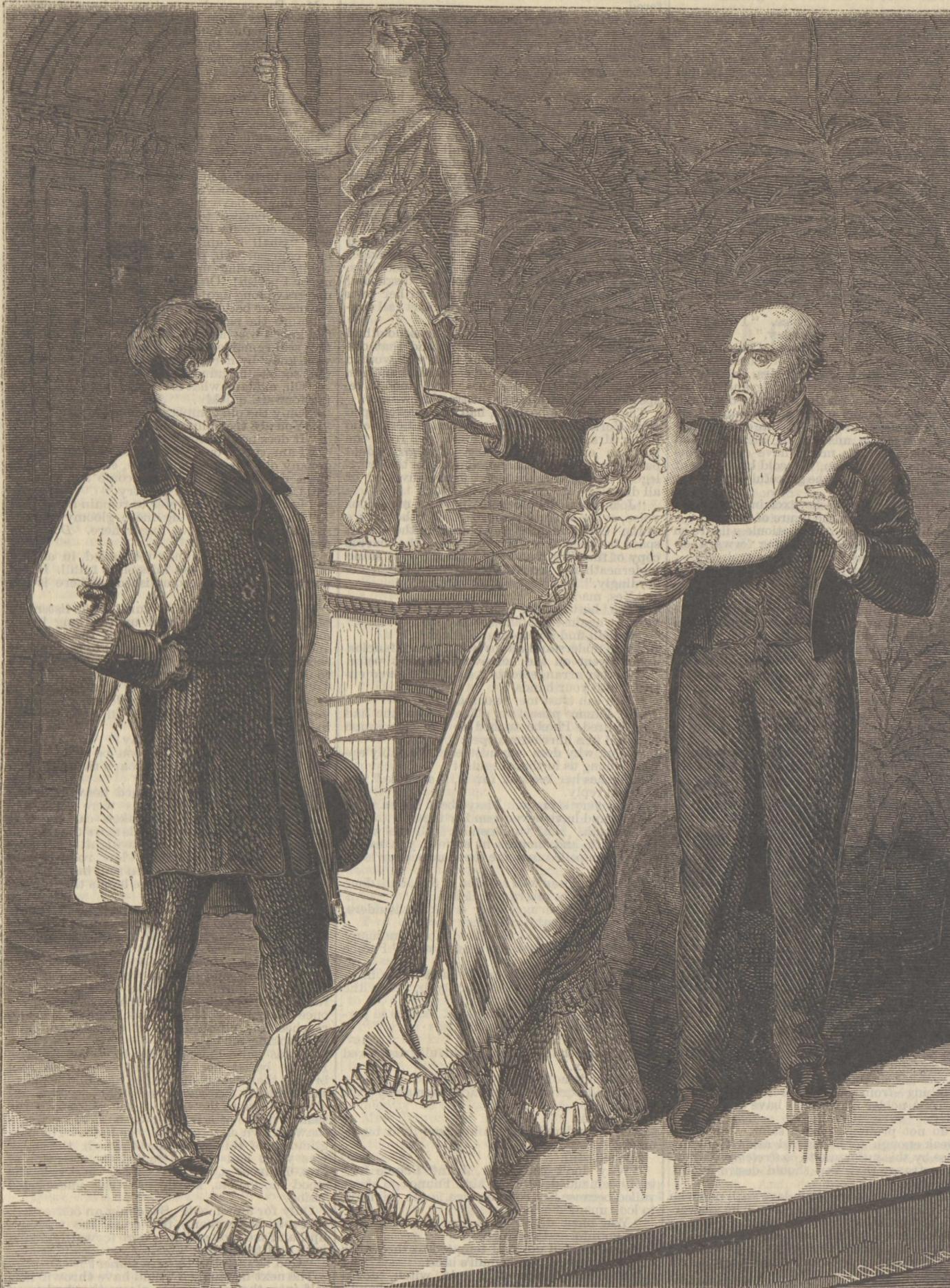
"Thank you—none. I can wait. Another hour and she will be my wife. Then I shall have no use for go-betweens."

There was so much exultation in his voice that Dolores again lifted her eyes quickly. The face into which she gazed was magnificent in its beauty, and most women found it irresistibly attractive. But a shiver of repulsion ran over the girl. Raymond Challoner was her cousin—almost her only living relative; nevertheless, she did not altogether trust him.

"I hope you will make Ethelind a good husband, Raymond," she said, earnestly.

"Am I not an idolatrous lover?"

Dolores sighed.



"I was so miserable—so unhappy! I meant to say farewell, and then see him no more."

Dolores, he said. "Egbert Challoner has no right to interdict these meetings."

"Remember, he has been like a father to me."

"That is no reason why you should submit to him as a slave. He knows that we should turn him down, and yet he has forbidden me the house, and commanded you not to see me."

"And why? Simply because I am poor, and therefore not an eligible suitor for your hand. It is shameful!"

"Hush!" whispered Dolores, in a shivering voice. "Try to bear with him for my sake."

"I have borne too long already."

"Don't speak like that. It pains me to hear you. But it is not prudent to linger here. Tell me why you sent for me, Vincent, that I may return to my own room."

"I believe you are anxious to be rid of me!" was the half-sullen exclamation.

"Oh, no. But you know as well as I do the risk we run in coming here."

There was a moment's silence, and the young man drew a long, slow sigh to his side.

"There must be an end of this," he said, in a low voice that was scarcely audible. "We seem nearer the consummation of our happiness than we were two months ago. I have made up my mind. When this wedding is once over, I shall go to old Mr. Challoner, and make a clean breast of everything."

Dolores threw up her hands, a look of real terror on her face.

"Oh, Vincent! my heart misgives me. Promise me that you will do nothing rash. My grandpapa might curse me in his anger, and that I could not bear. Wait—be patient a little longer."

Her breath caught itself in hysterical sobs, and she would have hid her face on his shoulder had he not suddenly pushed her from him.

"Compose yourself," he whispered. "I am certain I heard footsteps."

Dolores clung faint and trembling to the trellis. After a moment of intense suspense, her worst fears were realized. Forth from the

more composed, and leaning a little toward him, said in an eager whisper:

"I wish you would tell me why you are so bitterly opposed to Vincent. You never assigned any sufficient reason for the dislike you profess to feel."

"He is not a suitable match for you."

"Because of his poverty?"

"That is one of the reasons."

"You did not oppose Raymond's marriage with Vincent's sister, Ethelind."

"True."

The girl's lip took a scornful curve.

"I think I understand the real nature of the distinction you would make," she said, almost bitterly. "Ethelind was fortunate enough to fall heir to her mother's fortune, while poor Vincent has nothing. It is merely a question of bonds, bank stock and dividends."

"Nay, child, you are mistaken. Ethelind is a noble young woman—even the proudest family might feel honored to welcome her to its circle. She is, however, unfortunately, does not resemble him in character or disposition."

The girl's face suddenly became white and drawn as if with pain.

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"Simply this, that I have no confidence in the man, or in his professions. Let that suffice. We will speak of him no more. You must give him up. I shall not brook a second act of disobedience."

Turning as he spoke, he left her without another word. Dolores stood for some moments like one stunned. She turned giddily from the sight of glittering plate and snowy damask of the wedding banquet as if it had sickened her. At length she groped her way up the deserted staircase, muttering with livid lips:

"Ah, how pale does my grandfather guess of the shameful truth! And, God help me! how can I ever tell him? I am too miserable to live! Dear, dear Vincent! I cannot think evil of you—I will not! It would kill me. May God keep you true to me—true to yourself!"

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE UNWILLING SUPLIANT.

"Is there within thy heart a need  
To make me carry thy load?"

"One hand in thine, the other hand  
Could better wake or still."

Speak now, lest at some future day  
My whole life wither and decay."

—MISS PROCTOR.

Dolores had scarcely regained the shelter of her own room, and thrown aside her heavy shawl, when slow, dragging steps descended the corridor. Looking up expectantly as the door swung open, she saw the bride-elect, Ethelind Erle, totter across the threshold.

"Oh, my poor friend! What brings you here?"

Dolores started impulsively forward as she asked the question. Whiter than her bridal-robe, Ethelind stood before her, her fair oval face twisted with pain and her eyes, so like violets in calmer moods, looking steadily forward in a dreary stare absolutely appalling.

"Hide me!" the poor creature cried at length, imploringly. "Dolores, you are my only friend. Lock and double-lock the door. I want no one but you."

Dolores shoved the bolt into its socket; then, returning, she gently took Ethelind's hand and drew her to a seat.

"What has happened?" she said, compassionately. "Tell me all about it!"

"I want to get away—away from him!" cried Ethelind, wildly. "I—I hate him. 'Tis of no use struggling against the feeling. It grows more and more intense. I believe I am mad now. My head is burning. Oh, Dolores, pity me!"

"I do pity you," was the gentle answer. "Is this marriage so extremely distasteful to you?"

"I would rather die than become Raymond Challoner's wife."

Dolores sighed, and a heavy weight settled upon her heart. She had long suspected that Raymond did not possess all the love of the bride he had chosen, but this active, intense repugnance shocked and surprised her.

"Oh, why did you not speak of this before it was too late?" she exclaimed.

Ethelind dropped her eyes and shuddered.

"I feel like one just waking from a dream. I never fully realized what I had done until tonight when I roused up to find myself arrayed in these hateful robes. Oh, if they were only my shroud it would not matter!"

"It is wicked to say such things, Ethelind."

"If it is, I do not know. In the grave there is peace and rest. Oh, if I could find them!"

She started to her feet, and began to march restlessly up and down the room, her hands clasped tightly on her bosom. Like the ghost of a duchess she looked with her ghastly face—in which the only spots of color were the violet-blue of her eyes—and her trailing satin robe over which fell, uncared for, the fleecy folds of the bridal-vail.

At length she paused before a Japanese cabinet that stood in one corner of the room. She remained there motionless so long that Dolores, softly following her, saw that her eyes were fixed upon a small dagger of foregn workmanship that reposed on one of the shelves.

"Better death than a life of misery," muttered the half-crazed creature. "God is merciful."

"He knows my temptation and despair—he will forgive me." With a frenzied laugh she seized the dagger, and in another moment would have buried it in her bosom had not Dolores arrested the uplifted arm.

"My God, Ethelind, what would you do?"

"Let me alone! Why did you seek to hinder me?"

"My poor friend, do you not know that self-destruction is the one sin that Heaven itself cannot pardon?"

A distressing wail broke from Ethelind's lips, her limbs trembled, and she sank down on the floor as if strength had suddenly deserted her.

"I told you I was mad."

"I believe, on my soul, you are. Come, let me remove your wreath and vail and you shall lie down on my bed until you are more composed."

Ethelind fiercely pushed away the hands that would have performed these friendly offices.

"Let my vail remain. It is altogether fitting

that Raymond should have a mad-woman for his bride."

"There shall be no marriage! If no other voice is lifted against such a wicked proceeding mine shall be. Oh, Ethelind, why did you cloak your real feelings until this late hour?"

"It was a part of my madness," she added, while a shudder passed through her. "I have acted like an insane person all these weeks. It was pride that caused me to accept Raymond Challoner. I plighted my troth to him while my whole heart belonged to another."

There was a slight pause. Dolores felt herself turn paler, but still leaned over the stricken creature, gently clasping her arms about her.

"Let me go to Colonel Falkner, your guardian, and tell him all this."

A sudden scarlet flamed over that pallid face, creeping up to the roots of her glinting auburn hair. She quickly arrested it, and said at length in a scarcely-audible voice:

"Do you think Colonel Falkner would help me?"

"I do."

"Where is he?"

"Down-stairs, among the guests, I suppose."

"Very well. You may find him, and bring him here."

Dolores poured a glass of water, and when Ethelind had swallowed it she led her to an easy-chair beside the open window. The curtains were looped back, and the moonlight streamed into the room. The faint perfume of violets and mimosa was on the air.

"Take courage. All may yet be well."

Having uttered these comforting words, she went out hastily. Her own troubles had no place in her consciousness at that moment. She descended the grand staircase without giving a second thought to the curious eyes that were upon her, though the invisible whisper reached her ears as she gained the lower hall.

"That is Miss Glynn. She is to be bride-maid. Isn't her dress becoming?"

One of the servants stood near the drawing-room door, and to him she spoke in suppressed tones:

"I must see Colonel Falkner. Please find him, and ask him to come here."

The servant bowed, and hurried away. Three minutes later, a tall, powerfully-built man of two-and-thirty had taken her hand and was bending over it. He was distinguished-looking rather than handsome. His eyes were large, and of a deep gray, his hair black. It was a face that never failed to attract.

"John says you were asking for me, Dolores," he said.

"Yes. Colonel Falkner—Ethelind is in my room. She is in trouble. You had better go to her."

He looked at her with a glance of surprise.

"There has been no blundering in the arrangements, I trust?"

"It isn't that. Will you go?"

"It lacks but ten minutes of the hour appointed for the ceremony," he said, referring to his watch. "Yes, come quickly; we have no time to lose."

They passed together up the stairs, under the arches of living green with which they were decorated. At the door of her own room Dolores paused, and signed for Colonel Falkner to enter alone.

"I will wait here," she said.

He went in and closed the door. A sudden thrill went to his heart as his gaze rested upon that drooping, listless figure at the window. He trembled as he drew nearer.

"Ethelind, I am here. What can I do for you?"

At the sound of his voice she half-rose, with clenched hands, but instantly fell back again.

"If you do not save me," she said, in a sharp, unsteady whisper, "I lost."

"Save me! From what?"

"A broken heart—a blighted life."

Colonel Falkner looked at her curiously. She was shivering, and her face shone deadly pale in the lamplight; but her blue eyes burned and glittered feverishly bright.

"Has Raymond done anything to offend you?" he asked, after a brief pause.

"Raymond! Don't speak his name!" she cried, vehemently. "I hate him. I dread his presence—I shrink from his touch—oh, would that I could hide away from him forever!"

"Poor child! How long has this been so?"

A hysterical laugh broke from her lips.

"How long? It has never been otherwise. He was always distasteful to me—always."

"Why, then, did you betroth yourself to him?"

His tone of gentle reproof seemed to sting her beyond all her powers of self-control. Leaning toward him, she said quite fiercely:

"And you ask that—you who might have saved me, by a kind word or a loving look, from this living death? Great God!"

"Ethelind!"

"Let me speak. It is better so. The shame of the confession may kill me. But for your indifference I might never have given myself to another. I hoped to forget you—in time. Oh, vain delusion! And I hoped that you, too, would forget the pang of pain when we were parted forever. Good heavens! That was a maiden thought than the other! You do not care how deeply I suffer."

Colonel Falkner himself turned very pale as if the words only pained and distressed him. After a silence he gained resolution to say:

"You are my ward, Ethelind—many years my junior. I invariably think of you as a child."

"Suffering develops one early."

"I remember now," she faintly panted. "I waited for the wedding—the guests were in a few minutes."

"It is strange that you should desire an unwilling bride."

"But you are not madly in love with one who I will simply remind you of Colossal hero. But, during the six months that have elapsed since you returned from that long, long sojourn in Europe, it has developed into the love of a passionate woman."

Colonel Falkner gave a shrinking gesture, as if the words only pained and distressed him. After a silence he gained resolution to say:

"You are my ward, Ethelind—many years my junior. I invariably think of you as a child."

"Suffering develops one early."

"I am glad you are better, darling," he whispered, bending over her.

"Go away," she panted. "Go, and leave me with Dolores. I am too ill to talk."

Dr. Lance now interposed in her behalf, and in a few minutes the room was cleared of all whose presence there was superfluous.

"Do try to rouse yourself, child," she said, drawing near the couch. "Poor Raymond suffers dreadfully. He does nothing but pace the floor, and send messengers to inquire how you are getting on."

"Why does he not go away?" Ethelind asked in a constrained voice.

"No, for it wrecked and caused my life."

She tried to look at him, but her eyelids drooped with a slight quivering that betrayed how deeply her nature was wrought upon. Suddenly her fragile figure began to sway violently, and she put out both hands like a person groping in the dark.

"I am faint—I am ill!" she gasped.

He sprang forward, and caught her in his arms just as, with a long moan, she would have fallen senseless on the floor.

### CHAPTER III. A TORTURED HEART.

Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,  
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth,  
A gracious person, yet I cannot love him.—SHAKESPEARE.

COLONEL FALKNER had been an officer in the late war, winning his title in wild scenes of carnage and bloodshed; but it had never before fallen to his lot to see a woman in a deadly swoon, and he forgot that he was helpless as a child.

A sense of self-reproach thrilled him as he gazed upon her deathly-white face resting so unconsciously upon his breast.

"May Heaven forgive me if I have been in fault for this," he muttered.

Raising his voice he called sharply to Dolores, who had remained on guard outside the door. She entered, looking nervous and flurried.

"Mercy on me!" she ejaculated, taking in the situation at a glance. "The hour has struck—they are looking for Ethelind—and now she has fainted on our hands!"

With ready presence of mind she removed the bride's crepe-lined veil, viciously tossing them into the darkest corner of the room; then wheeling a low couch up to the open window.

"Let her lie here, where the cool air will blow over her. That will do. Now lock the door, or we shall be invaded by every bridemaid in the house."

The caution did not come a moment too soon. Colonel Falkner had scarcely turned the key when an impatient knock sounded on the door, and a treble voice outside demanded news of the bride, who was missing from her chamber.

"Ethelind is here, with me," Dolores called out. "We will join you presently."

"The hour has struck, and Mr. Challoner is waiting at the foot of the stairs."

"Tell him to be patient."

"Let us wait and see."

Dolores recalled every remedy she had ever known to be employed in such cases, but all in vain. Not a single symptom of returning animation came back to those rigid limbs and marble-like features.

"A physician must be summoned," Colonel Falkner said at length, in a nervous tone. "She might die."

"Yes, we are doing her no good. You may slip out quietly. I will undertake to keep the room clear until Dr. Lance arrives."

At this moment an imperative knock sounded on the door.

"Open," said a haughty voice. "I must and will know the reason of this delay."

"It is my mother," whispered Colonel Falkner. "She must be admitted, of course."

He undid the fastenings, and Mrs. Falkner entered, looking very stately and grand in her black velvet dress, with the Falkner diamonds sparkling on her arms and at her throat. A resolute but winsome air was in spite of her six odd years was the mistress of Glenoaks, and many a youthful belle might have coveted the purity of her complexion, the cold brilliancy of her steel-gray eyes, and the graceful poise of her well-shaped head.

"Philip, where are you here!" she exclaimed, as her startled gaze rested on the figure of her son.

He pointed silently to the motionless figure on the couch. Mrs. Falkner sprang forward, effectually starting out of her self-control.

"Ethelind! Good heavens! What has happened to the poor child?"

"Of course. But what could have caused it?"

Dear me. Was ever anything so unfortunate?

I'm afraid we'll have to put off, and all our friends sent home again."

Colonel Falkner went out hastily to dispatch one of the servants for the family physician. Long before Dr. Lance arrived, however, in spite of every precaution taken, it began to be whispered about in the lower rooms that the bride-elect had suddenly fallen ill, and there was likely to be no wedding.

One of the first persons to besiege the room in which Ethelind lay was Raymond Challoner himself. He looked pale, anxious and nervous.

"She will be better soon—will she not?" he said, in a half-improving whisper, stealing to the side of Dolores.

"I hope so."

"Well enough for the ceremony to go on?"

"Certainly not," Dolores answered, sharply. "You must give her up for the present—thank God!"

He looked at her fiercely.

"Why do you conclude your sentence with a thanksgiving?" he demanded.

"Because Ethelind will have a respite she greatly requires. Do you not realize what has brought her to this pass? She does not love him, and the thought of the marriage is killing her."

"She will think better of it when all is over."

"You had better give her up."

"I am not so magnanimous," said Raymond, with a slight sneer. "She is necessary to my happiness, and I shall hold her to her plighted word. What else could you expect?"

"Nothing—from you," Dolores answered, bitterly. "A nobler man would have decided differently."

"I do not profess to be a saint. But I am not weak enough to be turned aside from my purpose by this unfortunate contrebute."

"It is strange that you should desire an unwilling bride."

"But you are not madly in love with one who I will simply remind you of Colossal hero. But, during the six months that have elapsed since you returned from that long, long sojourn in Europe, it has developed into the love of a passionate woman."

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### CHAPTER III. A TORTURED HEART.

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Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth,  
A gracious person, yet I cannot love him.—SHAKESPEARE.

"He sent me to inquire how soon the wedding can take place."

Ethelind hid her face in the pillow and shuddered.

"Put it off as long as possible—that is all I ask," she said, and then she broke out crying, hysterically.

### CHAPTER IV. THE LADY OF LORN.

"I'll dwell alone, alone,  
And none shall touch me—none shall look  
On me."—BARRY CORNWALL.

A LITTLE less than two miles distant from Glenoaks, on a steep declivity overlooking the broad blue waters of the bay that finally lost itself in the blue brine of the Atlantic, stood a dark, weird, gloomy old house known far and near by the singular, but in this case appropriate,

"A 'lorn' mansion it was in truth, standing solitary and alone in its eminence, and ever presenting the same dark, gray, forbidding aspect to the world, as if defying the ravaging hand of time.

"A house—but under some prodigious ban of excommunication."

Shame, misfortune, or death had speedily overtaken its different owners, one after another, until the simple country folk were led to avoid the desolate mansion as a place accursed, and it was left to molder tenantless and forsaken, as its prophetic name implied.

Suddenly the whole countryside was electrified by the rumor that a wealthy young widow, Mrs. Faunce, had purchased Lorn, and was coming to take possession immediately—possibly to bury some deep sorrow in the seclusion it offered.

A few days later, vans of handsome furniture began to arrive, pictures in boxes, musical instruments, and various articles of virtue and interest which went to show that the new owner of Lorn must be a lady of culture and esthetic tastes.

At length Mrs. Faunce arrived with her little retinue of servants. The young widow betrayed no inclination to cultivate the acquaintance of her neighbors, however. She denied herself to everybody who called, and all that the outer world saw of

They all have business outside; going away in the mornin' an' not comin' back till night. No, I told Mr. Richard I take you, the short time you was goin' to stay in the city, but I wouldn't make a practice on it fur no money. Not that I'd mind it so much if they was all as nice an' quiet as you be. But the majority on 'em ain't, not by no manner of means. I had enough of that sort of thing when my poor dead-and-gone husband was 'live.' When a body has got to his banker; with the proviso, however, that she repay me when her first quarter is due."

Irva felt the thoughtfulness and delicacy of these words.

"I think I have a way of obtaining all I shall need. To show my appreciation of your kindness, I suppose, in case I am mistaken, I will let you know."

"Now remember. In the meantime, I will write to my sister mentioning the accident, and the delay it has occasioned, and making everything clear and straight for you."

The resource to which Irva alluded was the chain, from which was suspended the locket containing her mother's picture.

On returning to her room she examined it. It was heavy and of solid gold, and must have cost considerable in the day of it.

The jeweler to whom she applied offered her twenty-five dollars, less than half its worth; but it was more than Irva expected, and it was very gladly accepted.

On her return she found a trunk in her room, on which were the initials of her new name.

In the bonnet-box was a brown straw hat, trimmed with velvet of the same color, and a long, drooping feather; much handsomer than she would have thought of buying.

In another part of it were gloves, handkerchief and various other articles of feminine apparel.

Irva knew, in a moment, who they were from,

but when Richard came in the evening, and she taxied him with it, half-reproachfully, he made strange of the whole affair, declaring it to be a mystery too deep for him to fathom.

"He ain't in no hurry. I told him that you was at breakfast; an' he insisted that I shouldn't tell you till you had finished."

Had Irva been a royal princess, Richard could not have bowed over the hand she extended to him with an air of more respect. He saw the doubts and misgivings so plainly visible in her constrained manner and varying color, and hastened to assure her.

Leading her to the sofa, he wheeled an easy chair in front of her, and sat down; a proceeding that served to still her fluttering nerves and put her more at ease than anything he could have said.

Irva remembered what he said to her on the night of their first meeting: "You can trust me. I am an honorable man;" and as she looked into those honest blue eyes, she felt that he spoke truly.

In order to invite her confidence, Richard told her all about himself. How he was an orphan, whose nearest relatives were two sisters, one a half-sister, several years older than himself.

He told her about Hannah, who had lived with his mother until her marriage; relating various anecdotes illustrative of her kindness of heart and good common sense; displaying such a fund of kindly and honorable feeling himself, that before she was aware of it, Irva was talking to him as freely as if she had known him all her life.

Richard suddenly checked the tide of his reminiscences.

"Now, let me hear a little about you. To commence at the beginning, how are you feeling?"

Irva's cheeks flushed.

"Very much as if I were a ship, sailing under false colors."

"Ah! well; we'll fix that all right."

Then catching the questioning look in the shy eyes that were lifted to his, he added, with a laugh:

"Miss Irva—you told me that was your name, I think—you look at me as if I was an ogre. Now, in spite of my six feet of stature, and ferocious appearance, generally, I do assure you that I am a most harmless fellow."

"I don't think you the least bit of an ogre," smiled Irva. "On the contrary, I find it impossible to express my admiration of your generous and noble conduct."

Richard's face lighted up at this praise, which sounded very sweet to him.

"Show it by trusting me a little."

Richard looked at the face, whose varying color showed the conflict that was going on.

"Don't think that I want to pry into anything that you wish to conceal. Only if there is anything that you would like to tell me, I pledge myself to regard it as a most sacred confidence; giving you all the counsel and assistance in my power."

It was some moments before Irva spoke, and when she did, it was slowly and with hesitation.

"I have little to tell, and that little is not pleasant to speak of, or remember. I am a worse than orphan; my mother died when I was a baby—my father I never saw. I was called by the name of the woman who brought me up, but to which she now just claims. I dare not bear that name any longer, because I have an enemy, a bad and cruel man, from whom I wish to escape. Pray do not think me ungrateful, but I cannot, dare not tell you more!"

"You need not; I will not ask you another question. I said what I did, hoping that I might be able to serve you."

"The only way by which you can do that is to obtain some kind of employment."

Richard glanced from the small hands to the face, which, with all its delicacy of outline, had a certain air of steadiness and resolution.

"Have you ever taught any?"

"No; but I think I could, if the pupils were not too far advanced."

Richard was silent, and Irva continued:

"If you knew of any place, I should be so glad. I would be content with very small salary."

A stranger would find it next to an impossibility, without credentials."

"The place with my sister, that Miss Lane, poor thing, w<sup>t</sup> to fill, is now vacant, and would just suit you."

"Would she take me without references?"

Richard knew what a careful mother his sister was.

"Could she have an opportunity of knowing you, she would trust you I am sure. Supposing you go and make a trial of it. My sister has never seen Miss Lane, and I know nothing of her death."

"Without letting her know who I am—I would that be right?"

"I don't think it would be wrong—under the circumstances. I don't mean, of course, to continue the supposition, but only for a few weeks, until you have had time to have confidence as you will to say to do. You can then tell her how it is. Or if you would rather not do so, I will look around, in the meantime, and find you some other opening. There is no possible chance for detection, as the lady whose name and place you take had no relatives except a younger brother, who was adopted by a man out West. As for wronging my sister in any way, I secure for her children a good governess, and that is all she requires. You will not find your duties hard or irksome. My sister is a thorough lady, in every sense of the word, and will do everything to make her home pleasant to you. There are only three children, the oldest not ten yet, very quiet and well-behaved."

"I have no doubt of its being a desirable place, and no fears that my duties will be too hard."

"Then leave the rest to me," interrupted Richard, gayly. "My shoulders are broad enough to take all the responsibility. If anybody is blamed, I will take especial pains to see that it rests on the right party."

"Now, my dear Miss Lane—that is your name now, you know—I want you to consider me the big brother you had forgotten you had, and who would only be too happy to be of service to you."

The tears sprung to Irva's eyes.

"I wish you were!" The honest fellow's face flushed at the strong protest his heart uttered against this wish.

"As children say, 'let us make believe,' that it is so. And in that relation, permit me to remark, as it was the intention of Miss Lane, that was, to do some shopping in the city, perhaps Miss Lane, that is, would like to do some, also, in that case, I hope she will allow me to be her banker; with the proviso, however, that she repay me when her first quarter is due."

Irva felt the thoughtfulness and delicacy of these words.

"I think I have a way of obtaining all I shall need. To show my appreciation of your kindness, I suppose, in case I am mistaken, I will let you know."

"Now remember. In the meantime, I will write to my sister mentioning the accident, and the delay it has occasioned, and making everything clear and straight for you."

The resource to which Irva alluded was the chain, from which was suspended the locket containing her mother's picture.

On returning to her room she examined it. It was heavy and of solid gold, and must have cost considerable in the day of it.

The jeweler to whom she applied offered her twenty-five dollars, less than half its worth; but it was more than Irva expected, and it was very gladly accepted.

On her return she found a trunk in her room, on which were the initials of her new name.

In the bonnet-box was a brown straw hat, trimmed with velvet of the same color, and a long, drooping feather; much handsomer than she would have thought of buying.

In another part of it were gloves, handkerchief and various other articles of feminine apparel.

Irva knew, in a moment, who they were from,

but when Richard came in the evening, and she taxied him with it, half-reproachfully, he made strange of the whole affair, declaring it to be a mystery too deep for him to fathom.

"Of course she'll come," said Richard, looking back; "I shall bring her myself."

"What a nice-lookin' couple they be!" thought Hannah, as she looked after them. "It almost seems as if they was made for each other. But lawfuls, his uncle would never consent in the world, an' as for Miss Janeys' Miss Kate, they'd go distracted at the very thoughts on't."

In less than half an hour Richard and Irva were steaming up the Hudson.

It was a beautiful day, and they remained most of the time on deck. It was the first trip Irva had ever made up the river, and everything was new and delightful.

With Richard, it had lost the charm of novelty, but he took great pleasure in pointing out to Irva the beautiful residences and places of note by which they passed. Indeed, he felt that it was, by far, the pleasantest trip he had ever taken, ending all too soon.

"We are nearly home now," he said, with a half-sigh; "it seems as if we had come in half the usual time."

"Yonder is Forest Hill," he added, pointing to a house perched upon a rocky eminence far above their heads. "We have to pass it to get to the landing."

It was likely to be her home for some months, at least, and Irva surveyed it with no little interest.

It looked very solitary, with no habitation anywhere near it.

Perhaps this thought was visible in Irva's countenance, for Richard said:

"You are a girl, and the other side about it from the river. On the other side the ascent is so gradual as hardly to be noticed, and the country round about very beautiful. My sister spends most of her time there, on account of the children. But I fear, from the city, I fear, at first, it will seem rather lonely to you."

"I do not like the city, and am very, very glad to leave it."

As Richard looked at the speaker he remembered what she had told him.

Who could be an enemy of one so gentle and good?

They had now touched the dock.

Beside a low, open carriage stood a colored boy, his glistening teeth very apparent in the smile that broadened his face.

"There is Jack waiting for us," said Richard. "This way, Miss Lane."

"How do you do, Jack? All well at the house?"

"All very well, I thanks you, Mr. Richard," responded Jack, with a low bow.

Richard assisted Irva in, taking the reins into his own hands.

"I'll drive, Jack; you can ride back on the express."

"All right. I've got to stop for the mail, anyhow. They told me to come for the young lady, but they didn't nobody say as how you was comin', Mr. Richard."

"There didn't any one know it. I thought I'd take them by surprise."

Richard had spoken truly; the scenery which lay on each side of the winding road that led to Forest Hill was very beautiful, and a calm, peaceful feeling came over Irva as she looked around.

"You like it?" said Richard, who had been quietly watching her.

"Yes. I have spent most of my time in the country; and it seems like getting home."

"I knew it," thought Richard, his mind beginning to be lost in a sea of conjectures as to how one, manifestly so unused to the world, should be thrust so entirely upon it.

A sudden turn of the road brought the house into view, on the broad piazza of which a lady was reading.

Two children were chasing each other over the lawn.

As soon as they saw Richard they set up a loud shout.

"It's Uncle Dick, mamma!"

The lady threw down her book and was down to the carriage almost as soon as they. "I'm coming, my dears," she said, smiling. "I'm coming, my dears."

"Is this really you, Richard?"

"This is really me," responded Richard, returning the kiss that was given him. "I've not come alone, you see. Miss Lane, this is my sheltered friend, Mrs. Vernon."

There was an expression of surprise in the lady's eyes as she turned them upon Irva, who evidently did not look at all as she expected.

Mrs. Vernon was a small, fair, pleasant-looking lady, who looked young to be the mother of the children who were clinging to Richard's hands.

She received Irva very kindly.

"I hope you have fully recovered from your injuries, Miss Lane. We were greatly shocked to see you not among the killed, and very relieved when we got this precious letter."

Irva was too truthful and conscientious not to feel keenly her false position. The color came and went, and there was such a confused feeling in her head that she dared not trust herself to reply, except by the simple expression of her thanks.

Perceiving her embarrassment, Richard now interposed.

"Miss Lane is not very strong as yet, and I take the liberty of suggesting that she be shown directly to her room."

They had now reached the house, and touching the bell, Mrs. Vernon consigned Irva to the care of the colored girl that answered it.

"How different she looks from what I thought she would from Rev. Dr. Quinlan's letter," said Mrs. Vernon, as she looked after her.

Richard, who was the youngest of the little Varnells clinging to his neck, suddenly put her down, and stood up.

"What kind of a description did he give of her, pray?"

"I don't know that he gave any particular description, but I gathered from it that she was older, and not so—so pretty."

Richard's spirits suddenly rose.

"Young and pretty, what a terrible misfortune!"

"You may laugh, Dick," said his sister, a little gravely, "but it is a misfortune for a girl in Miss Lane's position to be so pretty."

"Position! I wonder if there is a word in the English language that you and Janeys' have so often on your lips?"

"I wish you'd thought of it a little more," was the reverent and composed response.

"I wish I did," said Richard, dryly; "especially when I have so much to boast of. I think our maternal grandfather was a shoemaker!"

This was a sore subject with Mrs. Vernon, as her brother well knew.

"You will be always bringing that up, Dick;

when you know as well as I do that grandpa never worked at his trade since we can remember."

"I beg your pardon, sis, but grandpa Baker made me my first pair of boots; and nice ones they were! I am really proud of the old man.

And I know another thing; that father was never sorry he married the shoemaker's daughter.

"Now tell me honestly, Kate, would you exchange her for Janeys'?"

Irva made no reply, and Hannah did not pursue the subject further.

The good woman's conscience pricked her a little, for she knew that Richard paid Miss Weston no more attention than one of his kind.

Hannah's nature would naturally pay to his sister's guest.

"I mean it for her good," she said to herself.

"If she has got any such notion into her head, an' they should



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## THE STAR SERIALS!

BY

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all in hand, and to rapidly succeed one another, are each brilliant and specially fine works by these master pens of American Fiction Literature.

**Sunshine Papers.**  
**Baby Shows.**

BABY shows are just the rage. County fairs have them, then New York has one, then Philadelphia must have one, and next Brooklyn follows suit, and so the fashion spreads, as all idiotic fashions do spread, like "wild-fire." And babies lean and babies fat, babies tall and babies short, babies ugly and babies handsome, babies good-natured and babies vicious, babies with teeth and babies without, babies who cry and babies who laugh, babies in single, double, treble and quadruple groups, and the handsomest mothers of all the maternal authors of these little beings are exhibited for the benefit of a curious and idle public, eagerly seeking after anything new, extravagant, bizarre, ugly or distorted; and for all this notoriety, the babies and mother who excel in their specialty take a prize! And this prize, offered to the

"handsomest mother," is, I am inclined to believe, a greater incentive for these feminines to exhibit the charms of their respective offspring to an admiring public, than any hope that their particular infant, or infants, will be preferred above others.\* A woman may, possibly, doubt that her child is the handsomest child that ever was born, but she never doubts concerning her own good looks. And when "the handsomest mother" receives her prize, every other woman who presented herself as a candidate for it, will wonder how it was that she was not chosen.

But it is not necessary to waste money upon baby shows, even though one has no scruples about countenancing their debasement of humanity to a level with dogs, cats, cattle, poultry and other lower orders of animals; one can see baby shows at all times, and in all places, free of charge.

Do you travel by rail or by steamer, by ferry boat or horse-car, you are sure to see a baby show on your journey; and are a trice-happy mortal if you see not a dozen. There will be several distributed around the car, or occupying the steamer berths next yours, who will smile, and frown, and suck their thumbs, and soil their bibs, and smear themselves and every one who comes near them with fruit, cakes, or candy, and crow, and wail, and chatter, and romp, until you will piously wish them all in the bottom of the—Well, anywhere but near you! On the ferry-boat there is the obstreperous infant who insists on jumping and climbing, and running, and banging, and screaming, and communicating family secrets or remarkable wishes to every individual whom he can martyrize into a listener; and upon the horse-cars are the nurses with babies, and the mothers with babies, and the fathers with babies, all of whom *must* have seats. (And did you ever notice how a woman will get into a car, and until she obtains the desired seat tenderly cling to a big child that can walk and stand quite unaided at any other time?) And the babies slide upon the car floor and trip up unfortunate women who are hurrying to get out before they are carried more than two blocks beyond where they want to go, or climb upon the cushions, jamming in a gentleman's hat or knocking off his eye-glasses, or sit crosswise on their parents' knees, wiping their muddy small feet upon the next passenger's silk dress, or cry, or try to swallow their mittens, or disgorge their dinner, or perpetrate some other equally amusing, interesting, impish, or disgusting trick for the benefit of their elder companions.

Treat all with whom you have dealings alike; don't fawn upon the rich on account of their wealth, and don't speak sharply to the poor on account of their poverty. Do not be too ambitious to make a great show in the world; time enough for that when you can afford it. Don't be too desirous to have your name carved in massive marble over some great institution. Engrave it first in the hearts of your neighbors by good deeds and many actions. Don't grow discouraged and despondent. Impediments beset many paths but they must be put aside and you must work bravely on. If your first, second or even third efforts prove failures, have confidence enough in yourself to hope that the fourth will be a success. Do not waste too many words, or too much time, in telling what you *intend* to do, but go and do it at once, or others will be before you and make use of your ideas before you have the chance, and that is one good reason why it is best to keep one's business to oneself.

Do not be afraid to advertise your business after you are started in trade. Let the people know what you have for sale and your customers will arrive. Pay no heed to those who tell you that advertising is hubub, for they are often humbugs or stupidities, themselves.

Let your wife know the state of your pecuniary affairs, and, take my word for it, she will be the first one to economize when she sees there is a *necessity* for her doing so.

EVE LAWLESS.

We must all have scoldings some time or other, but we have to bear them, and I don't know but we are made better for bearing them cheerfully.

Have courage and be hopeful. If days are dark and "times hard," look forward to brighter and better ones; this will inspire you to push on; but, if you don't look forward, you not only clog your own way but stifle the passage for others. A great many persons in reading of those who have amassed wealth by an honest and upright course, wish they had their fortunes, but how few think of their integrity!

Poverty doesn't shut so many doors to a person as is supposed. The expression—"poor, but honest" should be dropped. Just as though it was a singular thing for a *poor* person to be honest! I know of several worthy people, who would sooner cut their right hand off than do a dishonest action, and they are poor. I had as lief trust to their word as I would to that of a millionaire, and I know I had as willingly place my funds in their keeping as I would in that of the safest bank in America.

If you are in the wrong, be generous enough to acknowledge it, and don't, on any account, strive to work your way out of it by prevarication, for that is mean and wicked, and adds more to the fault. A straightforward course is the safest and surest. No one will think less of you for being willing to acknowledge you are in error; but, if a person discovers you are falsified your way out of it, you will receive naught but contempt.

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EVE LAWLESS.

**A PARAGON.**

Sonnet-Acrostic.

BY JAMES BUNGERFORD.

Fairly thy voice and presence wake in me  
A memory or a vision, of a girl who  
Neat as a white-rose, pure as is the pearl,  
Not given to any sort of vanity.  
In books well versed, seeking in all to see  
Over the beautiful—the true and good—  
Blessed with high dreams with heavenly life imbued  
Offering these boons to all, unconsciously,  
Sweetly and freely, as a flower-perfume  
Breathes upon all that loves its tender bloom  
Of the most noble gift: possessed, for thee  
Unto high heaven, in thy presence, that thou  
Realize all true blessings. Heaven, we know,  
Never performs its work imperfectly.

**Minnie Hosmer's Christmas.**

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

"NIEGE MARIAN—I am old, I am ugly, I am often cross, and I am not so rich as I might be. Nevertheless, I am lonely—will you lend me one of your girls to keep me company Christmas? I will meet her at North Hampton depot the day before Christmas."

"HANNAH MURRAY."

"WELL!" Mrs. Hosmer folded up this laconic epistle, and looked anxiously at the two pretty girls who dropped their sewing to listen.

"Somebody'll have to go, I suppose," she added. "It won't be me, then," spoke up Bell, the elder of the two girls. "I'm not going to give up my Christmas in the city with all the parties, operas, beaux, and high-jinks generally, to pique over to that little muffy, stuffy hole of a North Hampton! So that settles it!"

"I don't want to go, either," said Minnie, the bright-eyed younger.

"But one of you must go! There are reasons why I especially wish to keep aunt Murray in a good humor. And she evidently wants one of you very much."

"Oh, there's no use talking! I'm going to the city," said Bell. "Doctor Conroy told me last night that he expected to spend part of Christmas week there, too."

"Of course you'll go then!" said Minnie. And she repressed a little sigh, for she had sometimes wished that Doctor Conroy would like her as well as he seemed to like Bell.

"Of course I will, if I want to!" responded Miss Hosmer very graciously.

"Well, don't quarrel. Mamma, I foresee that if you wish us of us to go to North Hampton, I shall be the one."

"I do wish it very much, Minnie. But I'm sorry this invitation came just now, for I know you expected to enjoy your visit in the city as much as Bell."

"Yes, mamma. But, after all, it don't matter."

And a thought crept through Minnie's heart that she would be glad to be where she could not see Doctor Conroy's attentions to Bell. She would not have taken him from her for the world, but what she quietly wished in her own little heart couldn't hurt anybody.

"I'll tell you what!" she said, suddenly brightening, "it won't take half so much to fit me up for North Hampton as it would for the city! And I see you look sober over the bills this winter, mamma."

"Yes, that is an item of importance," admitted Mrs. Hosmer. While selfish Bell cried out: "Indeed it won't, Min! And then I can have ever so much more! Yes, you had better go, Minnie!"

Minnie turned away, half-vexed by Bell's heartlessness, but Mrs. Hosmer said:

"For shame, Bell! What Minnie does not need we shall save. We have got to be very saving this winter to get through at all."

"Oh, brother! I'm going to marry a rich husband, and forget how to save! I despise the word!" said careless Bell, taking up the over-skirt she was trimming, and resuming her work.

The day before Christmas both the girls, in pretty suits of seal brown, with cavalier hats, and neat sachets, were on the train—Bell to the city—Minnie to go on to North Hampton, to spend Christmas with aunt Hannah.

There were not many on board when they entered the car; each of the girls took a seat to herself, next the window, chatting across the seat, in fine spirits.

The car filled rapidly, and when an old lady came in, about twenty miles from the city, the places were all full, except where they sat. The new passenger was a very old, wrinkled and decidedly ugly little body, dressed in shabby waterproof, and when she half-paused at Bell's seat Bell turned her head, and looked steadily out of the window, filling up the vacant place with her shawl and sachet, as selfish travelers so often do.

The old lady then addressed Minnie in a sharp, but not unpleasant voice:

"Is this seat engaged, my dear?"

"No, madam. You are welcome to it," answered Minnie. And the old lady was established beside her, and soon chatting sociably.

Bell threw in a remark now and then to Minnie, and two or three times made little grimaces of contempt at Minnie's rather shabby-looking companion, which did not escape the notice of the sharp-eyed old lady.

When they drew near the city and the passengers began to gather up their belongings to leave the train, Bell said:

"Well, Min, are you bound to go on to North Hampton? I am," said Minnie.

"Of course I am," said Minnie.

"Well, then, joy go with you! But I tell you, Min, you are a regular goose to go down there and mope with a muffy, huffy old woman, when you might be having such a good time, after all."

"Maybe," returned Minnie, demurely, "but aunt Hannah does need company, I know, and perhaps I won't have such a bad time, after all."

"Do as you please!" returned Bell. And as they rose to go the sharp old lady made out to read Minnie's name on her sachet, and then she shows both the girls a look out of her little bright eyes.

"Let me help you. I am the younger," said Minnie, pleasantly, reaching out her hand as they went down the steps to the platform.

"Thank you, dear. I am not so young once," returned the old lady, accepting the offered assistance, and descending in safety from the car-step.

She kept close to the girls, while Bell, with one more attempt to persuade Minnie to stay with her, said good-by and went away.

And Minnie found her still at her side, when she turned to the other train which was to carry her further on her journey.

"Can I find your train for you, if you wish one?" Minnie kindly inquired.

"It is the same as yours, I think," answered the little old lady. "You go on the Western Branch."

"Yes, man'am, as far as North Hampton."

"Well, I see somewhat further on that road myself, and as you seem to be a kind young lady, I shall be glad to travel in your company."

So Minnie helped the old lady into the new train, and they sat down together.

They rode very pleasantly for awhile, and were not far from the end of their route, when suddenly there was a jar, a shock, and the next instant, with a heavy crash, the train was lying upon its side over an embankment, and the great engine was a total wreck.

The car which held our travelers was not so badly injured as some of the others. Minnie found she could stand upright, and her first thought was of her old lady, who was prostrate among the ruins of the seat.

"Oh, I hope you are not hurt! I hope you are not hurt! Let me help you up," she said, bending over the old lady, and trying to raise her to her feet.

"Not hurt, I think, but stunned and shocked, my dear—young lady," replied the old lady, raising upon Minnie's arm.

"Can you walk, with my help?" asked Minnie.

"I think we can get out, for we are on the highest side of the car. Cling to me, and let us try."

Tenderly supporting the feeble steps of her companion, Minnie walked and climbed over the wreck of seats and windows, until they got to the door of the car. And then what was her surprise when the first person she met was Doctor Conroy!

"Miss Hosmer, you!" he cried. "I did not know you were on the train!"

"And I did not know you were!" Minnie responded, blushing.

"I was going out a few miles to visit a patient."

"And I was going to North Hampton."

"Ah! we are only about ten miles from North Hampton. What a pity this smash-up hadn't waited a little longer! Shall I assist you and this lady to a place of more comfort?"

And then Doctor Conroy, being a true gentleman, took both Minnie and her old friend to a cabin near by, where they sat down upon some lumber, to breathe and look about them.

The accident was not a serious one—only a few persons were injured, and they only slightly; but the train could not proceed, of course, and they would have to wait hours, in the cold.

"I think you will be to all, unconsciously; Breaths upon all that loves its tender bloom Of the most noble gift: possessed, for thee Unto high heaven, in thy presence, that thou Realize all true blessings. Heaven, we know,

Never performs its work imperfectly."

"I am going to North Hampton."

"Oh! I will go with you and show you!" cried Susy, enthusiastically.

"Or we will take the cars and go to the Park."

"Wherever you will. I am in your hands," replied their guest, courteously.

"I think you will like the Park," said Mrs. Hardy, enthusiastically.

"It is ever so pretty a place. And then it's got marble statues, and fountains, and the sweetest lake, and geese swimming in it."

"Swans," corrected Susy. "The idea of calling them geese! Those beautiful white swans! You should only see them swim, Miss Alice. So stately and graceful.—But may be you have seen swans."

"Yes, and geese, too," their guest smilingly replied.

"We will go to the Park at any rate. I am not yet tired of seeing beautiful things."

But I am half-afraid, Mrs. Hardy. My enemies—"

"You have not so many of them?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"Two or three only."

"Two or three in a million!" and Mrs. Hardy laughed at the idea. "Why it would be like hunting the needle in the haystack. You don't know what a monstrous place New York is. And I suppose your foes have no time to spare from their rogueries for strolling in the Park."

"That may be so," admitted their guest, musingly.

"Oh, come!" cried Susy, dragging at her hand. "I will take the best of care of you. And if anybody says anything to you he had better look out for himself." And Susy was comically savage in her manner.

"Very well, then, if I am to have such a doughty champion," asserted Miss Homer, laughing.

"If you wear such a look as that you will certainly frighten the men into good behavior."

"You don't know how fierce I can be," explained Susy. "Come on. I just hope some body will speak to us, so that I can show you."

The two new friends were very merry as they rode together to the Park. Susy seemed to feel it a part of her duty to be as lively as possible to cheer up the unfortunate lady, and the latter forced herself to respond to the child's efforts.

It was a pleasant afternoon, and the Park in the acme of its Juneteenth beauty. Streams of showy carriages filled all the drives; and throngs of gayly-dressed people lent a charm to the walks. Children rollicked and laughed. The hand that pressed with warmest sympathy, laid on the pulseless heart, and heartless breath.

The icy foot, that in life's paths did tread, was now as light as yesterday, but I went to Centerville on business, and it turned so cold I was not well enough wrapped up, so I had to borrow the best I could till I got home. I knew you before we left you sister yesterday, but I thought I would not reveal myself. That paper is your mamma's present from you, Minnie. And this is your own."

She put into Minnie's hand a handsome case, containing an elegant little gold watch, and as Minnie tried to express her thanks, she thought her chaperone in her admiration.

"Well, don't you worry about it," said Bell.

"Indeed it won't, Min! And then I can have ever so much more! Yes, you had better go, Minnie!"

Minnie turned away, half-vexed by Bell's heartlessness, but Mrs. Hosmer said:

"For shame, Bell! What Minnie does not need we shall save. We have got to be very saving this winter to get through at all."

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"I was going out a few miles to visit a patient."

"And I was going to North Hampton."

"Oh! I will go with you and show you!" cried Susy, enthusiastically.

"Or we will take the cars and go to the Park."

Monroe. "Take him by shoulders and heels then—and leave."

The words were accompanied by the action.

There was a heavy splash, a commotion of the water—and silence. Their freight had disappeared.

In an instant the boat had already drifted away from the dark spot where the helpless victim had sunk.

An impulse from the oars and it was lost in the darkness.

"Ashore! Quick as lightning!" spoke the captain, in low, excited tones.

In fifteen minutes more they had regained the stern of the boat, and the mate had ascended her side again in hand.

"What is that?" exclaimed the captain, with a scared utterance, as he slightly stumbled.

"What?" quickly rejoined the mate.

"I stepped on something soft."

"Oh! it's a roll of oakum, that was flung into the boat this morning. Mount up here, quick! We must get to bed."

They did not hear a muttered sound, that came from the bow of the boat, and that seemed to form itself into these words: "Blame your awkward feet! Is there your sea-legs?"

Phil Hardy, their dwarfish foe, had gone to the bottom of the East River, and his servants with him; and all they could think of, and their guilty souls were full of superstitious fear as they hastily retired to the cabin of the ship, not sure but that the spirit of the murdered boy might have preceded them.

### CHAPTER XIII.

TRAPPED.

The letter of which Phil had proved such an inefficient postman, and which had fallen into the wrong hands, ran as follows:

"310 GLOUCESTER STREET, NEW YORK.

"DEAR HARVEY.—You will be surprised to learn that I am in your city now, instead of at my old home at Liverpool. Here I am here is a long and not very agreeable tale, which I shall have to tell you in person. I have been through the most terrible perils, but am safe here, now, in the home of some worthy people."

"But you are too poor to be burdened with me, and I wish you to devise some means of taking me to my aunt's. You know who I am, Mrs. Hannah Corson. She lives somewhere above Harlem, I believe."

"Let me read from you without delay, as I am a little anxious about staying in this part of New York. Please excuse the shortness of this note. It is only a business paper, you see, and my messenger is waiting anxiously for it."

"Don't fail to answer at once, and don't forget that I am still your true friend." ALICE HOMER."

It may be seen that this letter gave Andrew Cunningham into whose hands it had fallen, an opportunity to prosecute his schemes which he was not slow to perceive. Alice had put a weepion, which might prove fatal to her, into the hands of her worst enemy.

But all unconscious of this she waited, on the afternoon of her return from the Park, somewhat impatiently for an answer.

Little dreamed any of them into what deadly peril Phil had fallen, and his grandmother was getting quite tried at his ridiculous delay.

She was quite oblivious of the fact that she had for years been training him into these careless habits.

"Oh! never mind, Mrs. Hardy," protested Alice. "It is not really so particular."

"If you had only told him you were in haste," continued the old lady.

"It does not matter at all. It is only the curiosity of an idle woman that ails me. If I do not get an answer until to-morrow it will not matter. I wish you would only put me to work at something."

"I would like to give you something to bring back the color to those white cheeks," said the compassionate old lady. "I do not like to see you looking so."

"Dont mind that, Mrs. Hardy. That is only my right at the Park. I do not intend to continue looking white. Do let me pare those potatoes for you."

"What? With those delicate hands? No, indeed. You shall do nothing of the sort."

"You do not know what these delicate hands are capable of. I shall scrub off that table, at any rate."

There ensued an amusing battle for the possession of the scrubbing-brush, which Alice had seized with a great show of vigor. The old lady cowered, and held it aloft in laughing triumph.

"Catch me letting you do any such thing," she cried.

"Then I only see one thing that remains to do," replied Alice.

"And what is that?"

"For you to get a glass case, and seal me up in it, and stand me in a corner for a parlor ornament."

"And a beautiful ornament you would make, my sweet, pale child," said Mrs. Hardy, fondly stroking the face of her guest. "Why, you are as nervous yet."

"I am afraid I am rather frightened yet. Poor little Susy; she must have thought I was wild. Now you shall let me do something. That is the only way I can cure my hands of this trembling."

They were interrupted by the appearance of a young man at the open door, who inquired for Miss Homer.

"That is my name," said Alice.

"I was directed up here from below," he replied. "I have a letter for you, miss."

"A letter for me!" she exclaimed, surprised.

"Why, who—But Phil may have delivered mine," she continued to Mrs. Hardy. "He may not have waited for an answer."

She took the letter from the spruce-looking hand-writer.

"That will do, sir. Is there an answer?"

"I think there is, miss," he replied.

"Please wait a moment, then, and I will see."

She opened the envelope, and quickly read the letter, her eyes lighting up with satisfaction as she did so.

"He speaks of a carriage. Is it at hand?" she asked.

"Yes, miss. It is just round the corner, in the next street."

"Be kind enough to wait outside for a minute. I have something to say privately to that lady," commanded Alice, gently closing the door.

"I fear you must leave you, my kind-hearted friend," she said.

"Leave me!" faltered Mrs. Hardy.

"Yes. It was necessary I should not intrude too long upon you. I wrote to a gentleman friend requesting him to take me to the residence of an aunt of mine, who lives just out of New York."

"You have an answer from him?"

"No. He is from home. This is from his sister. She seems to have felt it necessary to open the letter and has sent a carriage for me."

"Are you sure it is from his sister?"

"Oh, yes! There can be no doubt of that."

"It struck me it might be another trick of your enemies. But then no body would get the letter from Phil but the right person. I know that. I suppose it was because the gentleman was not at home that he did not bring the answer himself—I do wish you had not been so quick, Miss Homer. I do so hate to lose you."

"You must not think that I will forget you," replied Alice gently. "You have been too kind for that. If I stay in New York you shall often see me."

"Why, you are not going!" cried Susy, breaking in upon them.

"Yes, my dear. A friend of mine has sent his carriage for me."

"But I cant bear to have you go," exclaimed the child, bursting into tears. "I love you so."

"Love at first sight is not always durable," replied Miss Homer, smilingly.

"I dont care! I shall never quit loving you!" cried the sobbing child. "And I dont see why you cant stay."

"There are reasons, my dear," replied Alice, taking the distressed child in her arms. "I can't stay to be a burden to Mrs. Hardy; for one thing."

"You are not a burden!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardy, energetically.

"I must try not to become one. I shall never forget my two dear friends. And I shall be sure to see you often. But now I feel that it is necessary for you to go to my aunt's."

"Perhaps it is," responded Mrs. Hardy. "And you, somehow, I hate to see going to your old home again."

"At last! at last!" But—"his brow clouded, and his eyes dimmed as he continued: "How can I do it? How can I leave him?"

He thrust the papers into the bosom of his tunic, and flung himself into the chair again, a half-triumphant, half-regretful expression resting upon his dusky face.

Margoun laid the sheet aside and picked up the other. With trembling fingers he untied the knotted ribbon. Spreading open the thick sheet, he glanced once at its contents. Then as a low, grating laugh, he cried:

"At last! at last!" But—"his brow clouded, and his eyes dimmed as he continued: "How can I do it? How can I leave him?"

He thrust the papers into the bosom of his tunic, and flung himself into the chair again, a half-triumphant, half-regretful expression resting upon his dusky face.

At that instant he chanced to look toward the rear window. The sash was flung up to let the passing breeze blow in. Margoun started to his feet and thrust his hand in his bosom.

Standing on the outside, looking in, was a tall, white-faced man with a pistol in his hand. He was on the point of leveling the weapon; but the Hindoo's sudden movement had diverted him, for he immediately turned and fled.

Like lightning Margoun darted forward, sprang through the open window, and disappeared.

The dark night wore on.

Thorele still lingered away; nor had Margoun returned. The servants had long since retired, and a brooding silence settled upon the Lodge.

Midnight with its ghostly associations came and passed. Then one o'clock.

A sharp pistol-shot rung out in the darkness of the Lodge. The sash was silent. But a few minutes later a wild, almost frantic cry echoed on the night air. Then the same dreary silence settled down again, only broken by the sighing of the night-wind through the thick copse.

Early that same evening Mrs. Grayling sat silent and morose in her gaudily-furnished bedroom. A strange fire was burning in her pale blue eyes; and a frown brooded over her marble-like brow.

"Strange! Where can Floring be?" she ejaculated, moving restlessly in her chair. "I have hunted her high and low, and have sent messengers for her in every direction, but to no purpose. Her things are here; but—" and her brow wrinkled the more, "I miss more than a thousand dollars from my trunk! Can I suspect Floring, or Abner Denby? However, that sum is a trifile. But where can she be?"

Little did the proud lady dream that that night the stage-coach, on its way to Wyndham Station, had stopped at the Grange, that a woman carrying a small valise had entered it; and that now, as she mused in her chamber, Floring Flavelle was speeding away toward New York town.

Mrs. Grayling arose from her seat and strolled up and down the room with restless, uneasy step.

"Floring has been behaving very strangely of late!" she thought, the frown upon her face deepening. "More than once she has been openly defiant, despite my independent position as regards money. Independent!" she echoed, in a startled whisper. "I miss more than a thousand dollars from my trunk! Can I suspect Floring, or Abner Denby? However, that sum is a trifile. But where can she be?"

Mrs. Grayling started violently; so did Grace, Abner Denby and Clara.

"Now here is the paper," and Thorele Manton drew the document from his pocket, and glanced over its contents. "I see it is dated six months ago, and on the day when the horses ran away with the sleigh. You, Mrs. Grayling, may recall that day?"

She shot a significant glance at her.

The white-faced, trembling woman only shuddered, and bent her head upon her wildly-pulsing bosom.

"Now, Mr. Denby and Dr. Goodspeed, I will tell you what you look at this paper," continued Thorele.

The two gentlemen approached and examined the document closely. Abner Denby recoiled, and in instant his cheeks were ashen.

"Whose writing is that, gentlemen?"

"Gilbert Grayling's," answered Dr. Goodspeed, promptly and emphatically.

"Mr. Grayling's," hesitatingly fell from Abner Denby's bloodless lips, as he retreated to his seat.

"Very good! Dr. Goodspeed, will you kindly scan that paper and tell me what is the substance of its contents?"

The old physician took the paper and read it through. Several times he started; and when at last he had finished it a smile spread over his face—a kindly, satisfied smile.

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"I had the privilege of learning the contents of the previous will, under which Mr. Grayling's property was distributed," he said. "This, and his voice trembled, "resembles it in some of its provisions, but differs in *totto* in others. Instead of giving his widow the bulk of his property, he gives it to his daughter, Grace, while he secures the trust and dollars *par anomus* and the Grange mansion during her natural life. The will was granted to Mrs. Grayling. "You, Mr. Manton, and," in a choking voice, "and myself, his old and tried friend, are left his executors, without the exactation of securities."

He gave the paper back to Thorele, who hid it in his bosom.

For a moment a deathlike silence pervaded the apartment. It was broken by the miserable woman, who cringed like a guilty thing in her chair.

"Why, darling," she said, in wonder, "that son of like roses?"

"Yes, my dear, that is the way in which, in one week, I got such fabulous wealth," he said, smiling. "And that was the way in which I saved Margoun's life. I fought the half-clad natives at fearful odds. But I was desperate then!" and he frowned.

"Now one thing more, darling Thorele," and as a shadow passed over her face, Grace drew near to her husband. "Tell me the link between you and her who of late was the wife of my poor father."

"Listen," and his brow clouded. "That woman was once my wife for one hour, and—don't interrupt me—the subject is distasteful, and I would banish it forever. She was my wife for one hour. But while I was awaiting her, to go to the depths of the gloomy woods, a French officer who was traveling in this country, and who was reputed to be rich, I had told her what as soon as we were married, I had told her what—that I was pecuniarily embarrassed, but that my prospects were good. However, she eloped with this officer. He was afterward killed at the bloody field of Gravelote. As soon as I learned beyond a doubt that she had deserted me, I readily secured a divorce without any publicity. But when she died, thinking that, in the eyes of God and man, she was my wife! She is the same about whom I once chastised Abner Denby; and here is her picture, which I have so long kept—but to be now destroyed. Look upon it, Grace; you will recognize it," and he drew from his bosom a miniature case and held it to her.

"Cynthia Summers was her name," he continued, as he saw Grace gaze in wonder at the picture.

"Cynthia Summers!" echoed the young wife.

"Yes, darling, I once loved her. By the way, darling, I saw in the paper to-day, that there had been a fire in New York, and old Mrs. Denby was—"

Before he could speak further, an old acquaintance, John, the driver, entered. He had just returned from the village post-office. He handed a large, weighty envelope to Thorele, and withdrew.

The envelope bore several foreign stamps, and was directed to Thorele in a handwriting that the young man knew at a glance.

Eagerly he clutched the envelope, tore it open, and took out two sheets of paper.

"From him! from him! At last! at last!" he murmured.

Then smoothing out the first folded paper, he read:

"CALCUTTA, August 6th, 1873.

"DEAR, DEAR SAHIB:—You do not know how it wrings my heart to go away without bidding you farewell, but I could not do without it. It would have killed me. But while I was awaiting her, to

amazement, picking up the other paper, and opening it, read it through. His fingers trembled and the sheet slid from them.

"Margoun was a native prince, my darling," he said, sinking into a chair. "He revolted against what he considered a usurpation of his rights. But in view of his high caste, and great influence, he has been unconditionally restored to his full rank and to his great estates! Wonder upon wonder!"

Months upon months rolled by; the Centennial year of American Independence dawned upon the world.

One day Thorle Manton and his young wife were strolling through the grand exhibition grounds. Behind them came a nurse, rolling in a baby-carriage a youngster who was just old enough to look at you, and dimpled his face with smiles when you called him Margoun.

As the happy husband and party were passing the house occupied in the "grounds" by the English Commission, Thorle started violently as he saw, coming from the building, a tall, dusky-faced man in rich oriental garb. At his heels trod two attendants, attired almost as gorgeously as himself, who was evidently their master.

The swarthy foreigner drew nearer. His eyes suddenly fell upon Manton. He sprang forward.

"SAHIB!"

"MARGOUN!" and the two strong men were locked in a loving embrace.

And the youngster in the cradle looked up and laughed merrily as he heard his own name!

The two friends had their own again. But no one was spoken of the poor misguided one over whose grave in the distant cemetery of Grayling Grange the summer grass had long been springing—no word was said of her, who in her brief young life had been: "The Loved of Many Men!"

THE END.

#### CHRISTMAS SHADOWS.

The needles have dropped from her nerveless hands  
As she watches the dying embers glow,  
For out from the broad old chimney-place  
Come ghostly shadows of "long ago!"  
Shadows that car' y her back again  
To the home of her childhood's artless joy;  
Shadows that show her a fine row  
Of stockings hanging the Christmas toy.

Shadow the show her the faces loved  
Of man a half-forgotten friend,  
And the Christmas Eve it is passing by,  
While Past and Present in shadows blend.  
Alone in the dear old homestead now,  
With o'erly the shadows of "Auld Lang Syne,"  
The clock is ticking the moments on,  
While the tears in her aged eyes still shine.

If only from out the silent world  
The world which took her so—  
One might return to his vacant chair,  
To sit with her in the fire-light's glow!  
Only—Was that a white, white hand  
That seemed to beckon her out of the gloom?  
Or was it the embers' last bright flash  
That started the shadows round the room?

The Christmas Eve has passed at length;

A glorious day from the night is born;

The shadows show her gone forever,

And the bell is ringing for Christmas morn.

But ah! by the broad old chimney-place

The angel of death keeps watch alone,

For straight to the Christ-child's beckoning arms

A longing spirit has gladly flown.

#### Gold Dan:

OR,

The White Savages of the Great Salt Lake.

A TERRIBLE TALE OF THE DANITES OF MORMON LAND.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,  
AUTHOR OF "VELVET HAND," "INJUN DICK,"  
"OVERLAND KIT," "WOLF DEMON,"  
"WITCHES OF NEW YORK,"  
"BLACK DIAMOND," ETC.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

A MILD TALE.

THE elder was down, mortally hurt. Just a single moan of agony, and then all was over; the ball had struck him square in the temple, just above the nose.

For a moment the Danite chief stared, astonished at the fearful sight—the dreadful work of an unknown foe, for the shot had come from the window, fired by some one concealed in the grounds without. The secret slayer had spared the dark Danite chief and selected the elder as a victim, that was evident.

And yet, without the house, there was not a sign to denote the presence of a living creature, bird, beast, or human.

The Danite turned to the casement and surveyed the grounds without. Twenty paces away was the open stockade gate, left open by the Danite himself on his hurried entrance. Through this the unknown had fired the fatal shot, and then had fled.

"Was it a friend or foe?" the dark Danite mused. "If a friend, why did he not wait that I might know whom to thank for the service, for, in truth, this brutal dog meant to kill me, if I interfered in his schemes."

Thus contemptuously did the agent of Mormon vengeance refer to the man now wintering in his grotto, who, living, had been one of the pillars of the church of Zion."

As the Danite gazed upon the ghastly face of the dead man, a strange feeling of terror came stealing over his heart of iron.

There was no mistaking the mark of the bullet. The self-same hand which had laid the burly Googer low, in the street of Corinne, had given his brother Mormon his death-wound! The mark of the big derringer bullet proved that, and then instantly to his mind flashed thoughts of Gold Dan; but if Dan had dealt this blow, why had he not spared the Mormon and taken him, the one he had most to fear?

The Danite glared around him, apparently seeking an answer to the question, and then, out upon the stillness of the night, rang the sounds of a horse's hoofs, urged to topmost speed.

Was the new-comer friend or foe?

A horseman came dashing through the gate, reined up his steed so abruptly that the brute came trembling back upon his haunches, and then threw himself to the ground.

It was the Texan!

And so white—so full of excitement that he seemed like a maniac.

He darted into the house, and, pistol in hand, stood trembling at the door, eagerly listening as if he had been pursued by a score of fiends.

"What's the matter?" asked Clark in his deep-toned voice, so quiet and yet so full of command, advancing as he spoke and laying his broad palm upon the shoulder of the other.

"This man! he is a devil! I cannot kill him!" the breathless, gasping horseman exclaimed, shivering with nervous excitement, and yet evidently feeling the soothing restraint of Clark's powerful will.

"You speak of Gold Dan?"

"Yes."

"You have not killed him, then?"

"Yes, I have killed him twice," the man answered, incoherently, the nervous excitement beginning to subside, and with it the frantic strength which had sustained him so well during the wild scenes of the night. His breath came heavily, and he leaned for support against the door-casement.

"Killed him twice, eh?" the Danite repeated; "why he must have as many lives as a cat."

"Through a trick, I lured him from his house, and then the instant his head appeared without the door, I drove a bullet into his skull at a foot's distance."

"Well, that ought to have settled any ordinary man," Clark observed, in his quiet way, still keeping a close watch with his keen eyes upon the agitated face of the other.

"And then when he fell prostrate at my feet—I empaled my revolvers into his body."

"And yet he escaped?" Clark exclaimed, jumping to a quick conclusion.

"I tell you I saw him dead at my feet!" the man cried, vehemently, "with no more life in him than is in the raw-hide fastened to yonder saddle, blood gushing from him from a hundred wounds, each one big enough to let out a life."

"Oh, then he is dead?" Clark began to believe that the man was either drunk or crazy.

"No, he is not dead, or else if he is dead his spirit haunts me!" the Texan cried, trembling with excitement and his fierce, black eyes rolling in such frenzy that they seemed likely to pop out of his head.

Clark laughed grimly; neither man nor devil could daunt his soul; the first he despised, the second he doubted. He had seen many a stout fellow go down in fierce and bloody fire, fated never to rise again in life, but never a one of them had ever come back to revisit the glimpses of the moon, to his knowledge.

"After I had slain him," the Texan continued, "after I had given him wounds enough to let out the lives of six men, I flung myself upon my horse, and fled. I rode straight to your den, just as you directed. I found the horse there, as you told me I should. I mounted, and rode straight for this point, according to the instructions fastened to the saddle; but an hour ago, when I turned into the main trail, who should I come face to face with, but this man!"

"With Gold Dan?"

"Yes; unhurt—unharmed!"

"You are sure?"

"Yes; either he it was, or the devil in his likeness."

"And what did you do?"

"Fired six more shots, straight at his heart!"

"Yes?"

"And he fell, all bloody as before."

"And you fled again?"

"Yes."

"Without waiting to see whether your shots had really taken effect or not?"

"I waited for nothing," the man answered, wildly. "I fled; that is all. Wait! will you see his spirit come riding up soon?"

From the wildness of the man's manner, the idea occurred to the Danite that all his story was but the fancy of a disordered brain, and so he resolved to act accordingly.

"I have changed my plans," he said, abruptly. "Instead of going to Salt-Lake I want you to return to my den in the mountains, and keep close there till I come to you."

"I will, but I will not return the way I came," the man replied, with a shudder; "his spirit bars the path!" And then, without more words, he flung himself into the saddle and rode off in the direction of Salt-Lake.

"Poor devil! he's mad!" the Danite exclaimed.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SECRET SLAYER AGAIN.

THE Texan had fled at his horse's topmost speed, and the Danite watched his departure in amazement.

"It's no use to send him to Salt-Lake as long as he's in this condition," he muttered. "The man is a lunatic beyond a doubt. I don't believe that he's seen Gold Dan at all; in madness dream of delusions."

The sound of the hoof-beats of the flying steed died away in the distance, and the Danite dismissed the subject from his mind.

"Now for Polly," he murmured, as he turned and again looked upon the body of the Mormon, slain so mysteriously by the secret assassin.

"Whoever fired the shot did me a service, for Biddeman meant mischief," he mused. "The girl is up-stairs, I suppose. Poor child! it was a narrow escape for her; this fellow would have had no mercy upon her, and to think that for years I have been low and degraded enough to do the dirty work of such rascals as this hound and the rest of his brethren! Bah! I am worse than a red-skinned!"

With this contemptuous exclamation, the Danite proceeded to search the ranch in order to discover the prison-place of the girl, which was soon found, and great was the joy of the captive when she looked upon the stern face of the Danite chief.

Man of blood though he was, hated by some and feared by all, yet on this occasion he seemed like a guardian angel to the girl.

"Oh, Mr. Clark, you will take me away from this dreadful place, won't you?" she cried.

"Yes, you are free to depart; no one will attempt to detain you," he answered.

"And Mr. Biddeman?" Polly questioned, with a timid glance around as though she feared the burly Mormon would step forward and attempt to prevent her departure.

"You need have no more fear of him," replied Clark, in his grim way. "He will never trouble anybody any more, in this world."

The girl understood his meaning, and a slight shudder passed over her slender frame.

"And you had to kill him to save me?" she asked, grateful and yet regretful that blood had been shed.

"No, he did not fall by my hand, although as things stood, the chances were that he would either kill me or I him, within ten minutes, when some unknown party settled the matter by shooting the elder through the window."

"And you do not know who it was?"

"No; not the slightest idea, excepting that it was no friend to the Mormons, and perhaps not to me, although, if the party had chosen, he might as easily have settled me as the elder, for I was nearest to the window."

"Oh, let me get away from this horrid place!" the girl cried, impulsively, advancing toward the door.

The Danite moved to one side, to allow her to pass.

Sie paused, irresolutely, in the entry.

"I am afraid to go alone," she said; "will you not come with me?"

"Afraid to go alone, and yet not afraid to trust me?" he asked, his strong voice growing quite soft, and even tender.

"Can it be possible?" he murmured. He bent over the girl as though he fain would have questioned her, but it was too late; the spirit had fled, and stern John Clark saw that he had a lifeless form within his arms.

Slowly, and as gently as a mother soothed her first-born, the fierce chief of border war carried the helpless form and deposited it upon the rude settle, which formed part of the fur-

they paused by the open door of the ranch; "within an hour's time, you shall be safe at home."

"Oh, how can I ever repay you for this great kindness?" she exclaimed, in an outburst of gratitude.

"Repay me!" he replied, and his voice seemed to tremble as he spoke; "why, when you hear men speak of John Clark—when you hear him called a villain and a cutthroat, just close your ears and try to remember that, bad as he was, he dared to brave the wrath of the Saints of Utah by rescuing you, a helpless victim, from their hands."

"You seek something—what is it?"

"A tall, dark fellow who has twice attempted my life-to-night," replied Gold Dan, promptly.

"You seek something—what is it?"

"Is he not one of your gang?"

"My gang!" Clark asked, slowly, but with a vacant expression upon his face, which plainly revealed that his thoughts were far away.

"Yes, a Danite."

"Oh, no."

The denial did not convince the plainsman.

"Twice, to-night, have I escaped him almost

by a miracle," he said. "He came this way,

and I have followed close upon his footsteps. This is a Mormon ranch, and just the place to afford me shelter."

"He is not here."

"But he has been here!"

"Perhaps?"

"And where is he now?"

The Danite shook his head.

"If he was one of my gang, as you evidently

believe, do you suppose, for a single instant,

that I would give you any information in regard to him? I say to you that he is not here

—there is no one here beside myself and two lifeless bodies. If you doubt me, search the house; you are welcome to do so, far as I am concerned.

For the present, I do not wish to quarrel with you—I do not wish to quarrel with any mortal soul until I have hunted down

the slayer of this poor child, and given him to

cruel a death as the mind of man can invent,

and then, after that is accomplished, I'm your

meat, or anybody else's."

The plainsman was a little puzzled by the speech; yet it bore truth on the face of it. It was of no use, then, to waste time here, and of little avail to push onward

## ON HAND.

BY JOE POYNTZ, JR.

The mouth may have its power of speech,  
But ah, what meaning lingers  
About the motions of the hand—  
The still and voiceless fingers!

A boy a father's palm may get  
Although unspeaking, silent,  
Yet he will know just what it means  
However quick and violent.

The bride she gives her mate her hand;  
It means a free love-token;  
He gets it often after that  
Whene'er the peace is broken.

When on your ear a hand should drop  
And on your cheek a mystic,  
It means the owner is quite mad  
And somewhat pugilistic.

If fingers in your hair should be  
Provokingly entangled,  
They mean it would be better far  
If you had never wrangled.

If some friend holds two fingers up,  
Just take it, then, as granted  
That something in the shape of V,  
Or rather "five" is wanted.

Five fingers rolled into a wad,  
And cast at your propositus,  
Means, with peculiar emphasis,  
It's very bad on noses.

A finger pointed at you has  
A meaning most important,  
More than the fingers of the hand—  
Indeed, it's rather scornful.

The hand which your haarer puts  
So tender on his eye is  
Symbolical that what you tell  
A something of a lie is.

A thumb placed gently on the nose,  
The fingers free for action,  
Reminds you that you are defined  
Unto your satisfaction.

So hands and fingers have a speech  
Whose reading will not bother,  
Which you are always sure to catch  
In one or two words.

And when I reach my hand to you,  
Kind reader, softly take it;  
It speaks of friendship tried and true  
As any heart can make it.

## Woods and Waters;

OR,

The Rambles of the Littleton Gun Club.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

VILL.

IN A DUCK-BOAT.

It was long before dawn the next morning when old Mart shook me by the arm as I lay in bed, and whispered:

"Git up, Launce, if you and Charley want fun. Tom's goin' to take the greenies out, and we're to have our route all to ourselves."

Of course we took but little time for me to get ready. Charley Green and I made up the majority with Mart the night before, and the old man had promised to take us under his charge for the day. He seemed to have conceived an especial liking for Charley Green of late, possibly on account of the lad's humility and desire to learn. Charley was in the same room as myself, and it was not long before we were both dressed and following Mart down-stairs. As we passed the rooms of the rest of the party, the audible snores proclaimed that the occupants were still fast asleep, but we found the keeper of the night-house up and frying salt pork, fish, and beans to know what else, before the old-fashioned stove in the sitting-room, where the genial warmth and smell were alike gratifying to the senses.

"Eat all ye kin, as hot as ye kin bear it, and swaller all the hot coffee ye kin pour down," was Mart's advice, which we were not slow to follow; for the cold morning had given us an appetite. Captain Bruce was the only other member of the party who was down with us in the dark, and he it was who came out with us after breakfast to the wharf.

It was still quite dark on the land, and the water was hidden from view by a damp, chilly mist that had settled over the whole river, but a dim grayish glow could be seen far away overhead in the east, that told of coming dawn.

By the wharf lay a whole fleet of boats and scows, with head and stern lines crossing each other in every degree of complexity. Mart seized one of the lines and drew up a small skiff, sharp at both ends, decked over at bow and stern, and having an oval well in the center in which to sit. Bruce drew up a similar one, close by, and motioned me to jump in, while Charley Green ensconced himself in Mart's craft. The guns were handed into the boats, and Bruce and Mart took up where we cast off the lines from rings in the stems of the boats into which they fastened with snap-hooks, and let them drop into the water. Tom Smith threw us the ends of the bow-lines, and we shoved off, pulling out into the stream.

"These North River duck-boats," said Bruce to me, as we pulled away, "are a good deal more elaborate than they use out West or on the Chesapeake. There any sort of a box that will hold a man and his gun will do for a duck-boat. Here on this river there is so much current and tide, and the sea comes so heavy at times, when the wind blows against stream, that a small boat and a dry one are alike required. Hence the need of this kind of covered canoe. It pulls easy against sea or current, and it is almost impossible to swamp it in my weather, on account of its decks and the hatch-combing over the deck."

"Yes," I said, "but isn't it pretty devilish?"

"Of course it is. We can't have speed and stability together in a boat of this size. If you want to eat the water you must have a narrow, sharp hull, and such a hull will roll. All you have to do is sit down low in the boat and mind your balance. You notice that the oars don't rest in row-locks, but pass through rings, and each ring has a pin which goes into holes in the row-locks. You set out when one is out rowing alone, with his gun before him, it may be necessary to drop the oars at times and shoot. This method prevents the oars from being lost, and is very general on all American river-boats, whether for ducking or fishing."

As he spoke, we were apparently entirely alone on the water, a sea of gray mist shutting off the shore and our companions alike, while we groped about in Cimmerian darkness. Still, Bruce seemed to be entirely certain of which way to pull, for he bent to his oars with a will.

"How do you know which way to go, Bruce?" I at last inquired, rather timidly.

"Well now, Poyntz," he said, with smile.  
"I hardly expect that question from a man of your age. When trying to go up-stream, and if you'll take these oars, you'll very soon feel the difference between that and any other method of progression."

"But, where are we going?" I inquired.

"We're going up to the feeding grounds of the ducks," he answered. "The river up here is full of islands, formed by accidental obstructions to the current, and these islands are all low and marshy at the edges. Some of them are made of nothing but mud, like those in the delta of the Mississippi, while others have bold rocky bluffs. This part of the river is very little visited to-day, and when we stop at West Point or Catskill, or elsewhere on the boats to Albany, on the way to Saratoga. The consequence is that we have a good deal of game still left. It has not all been killed off."

We stopped suddenly and listened intently. We heard a confused, fluttering noise ahead of us in the fog.

"Ducks," whispered Bruce, and he dropped his oars, letting the boat drift. The next moment he and I sat in the boat, gun in hand, gazing upward.

The fluttering sound continued, mingled with quacks, and increased into a regular thunder of wings, and the next moment we heard the mov-

ing body of ducks passing overhead. It was dark below, but growing light above, and we could see faint shadows as the flock passed.

A flash illuminated the gloom ahead of us and then another, followed by two loud reports.

"Now, Launce, give it to them!" whispered Bruce; and we both fired up into the moving shadows, ghostlike and ill-defined.

Then we sat and listened.

The thunder of wings was changed to a confused fluttering, mingled with a sharp cry of alarm; and you could all the noise, hear the three distinct splashes close to the boat. Bruce dropped his gun, seized the oars and backed the boat down-stream with three or four strokes, then let it drift, while he leaned over the side and watched.

"Watch your side, Poyntz!" he said, hurriedly.

I strained my eyes through the lessening gloom; and there, close by the boat, lay a dead duck, floating, feet up, which I seized as it went down-stream. Almost at the same minute, Bruce seized an oar and sent the boat whirling off to the left, when he leaned over the side and swung in a second duck.

"That's all we'll get this morning. I think," he announced, quietly. "The fog's too thick to find the other. We must pull away to the ground. That flock will come back. We'll fight them off."

Bump! came something against the boat, and we heard Mart's voice.

"Polkin' round in the dark like spooks! What have you done? We've saved five ducks for ye."

"Then one of them is ours," declared Bruce.

"I heard three splashes."

"We won't quarrel over it, Cap," said the old hunter, good-naturedly. "We've had mighty good luck, anyways. Now the fog's liftin'.

Look the other way to one side.

We were close to a low red-fringed shore and the fog was rising every minute.

"Here's our ground," proclaimed old Mart.

"And yonder's the blind. Come ashore!"

(To be continued commenced in No. 401.)

BY HENRY MONTCALM.

One Saturday evening, between ten and eleven o'clock, Fred Pease, assistant cashier of the Central Troy National Bank, sat at his desk, busily engaged upon some back work that must be finished before Sunday.

Every few minutes Fred would go through a series of motions that to any uninformed observer would have appeared extremely incomprehensible and ridiculous. He would bring his lips into close proximity to a sort of metallic bowl that was fixed just before him on the desk, and with a perfectly serious voice and manner would say to it:

"I hope you are not getting sleepy, dear!"

And then, substituting his hand for his lips, he would bring his hand intently for a reply that was certainly quite inaudible at any distance, and would then add, with a satisfied air:

"Well, don't get impatient, darling. I shall finish this job in fifteen minutes more."

The intelligent reader, who of course keeps pace with all the great discoveries and improvements of the times, will not fail to understand that this metallic bowl which the assistant cashier in his endeavoring a manner was addressing, was one terminus of a *Telephone*; and we hasten to explain that the companion "receiver" mouth-piece was located some distance down the village street at the residence of the young. Father's daughter Jennie was

Fred Purple's sweetheart.

Fred was an ingenuous young man, and had early taken advantage of Professor Bell's wonderful invention to establish a means of communication between the bank and Mrs. Farwell's cottage, so that he could keep up a conversation with Jennie even when he was away from her.

It may be added, too, that the existence of this apparatus was known, with the exception of the parties most directly interested, only to Mr. Jackson, the cashier. The board of directors would have held up its twelve hands in holy horror had they known in what it was.

"Old foggy" type, who regarded all modern improvements as in every way ruinous and to be religiously avoided. Consequently they coldly voted down a motion once made by the cashier to have the bank connected with his home by a wire.

At a quarter before eleven Fred had just one more column of figures to add. He had gone quickly up the "units" row, and was already half way down the "tens" when he felt, all at once, a hand laid heavily upon his shoulder. Greatly startled, he looked around; and then he rubbed his eyes to assure himself that he was not asleep. Three men—rough, hard-looking fellows as he had ever seen—stood behind his chair, one with a heavy bar of iron in his hand. Of course Fred knew in instant what they were there for.

"You'll excuse us, young feller—it was the man with the bar who first spoke—funny interloper! You. But we concluded yer wasn't goin' to git through at all to-night, and we've got to be some ways frisk here by mornin'."

"What do you want?" Fred asked, with parable trepidation.

"We want the twenty thousand dollars that's in there."

"But the keys are not here. Jackson keeps them up at his house."

"We know that, well enough; but it won't take us long to open the vault if we're left alone. Ef ye don't mind, we'll jest wind this bit of string around ye a few times jest ter keep ye from squirmin'. It'll make it more binding, ye know."

"Oh, certainly," said Fred, in as pleasant a tone as he could command under the circumstances.

He knew very well that he could not help himself and he put the best face possible on the matter.

The "bit of string" was a clothes-line which had probably been taken from somebody's back yard near by. This the three men proceeded to wind about Fred's body and arms and legs, without moving him at all from the chair; and, poor fellow, sat there, stupidly leaning on his elbows, and permitting himself, without a struggle, to be, as it were, done up in a net-work to keep him from squirming.

"There!" uttered the leader of the trio, at length. "Now, my friend, let's have a day-light understanding. We don't mean no harm to you; but ef ye raise a single squeak while we're goin' through that door, Jeems here, who will stan' over ye with her bar—he'll drive the thing through that top' er head clean down to your collar-bone. Are you savvy?"

Fred nodded ruefully. Yes, he understood very well, and he had not the remotest idea of doing anything to bring down upon himself so uncomfortable an infliction. He could see that they meant what they said.

So the leader of the others, paying no more attention to Fred, set to work with the various implements of their trade to open the door of the safe, while "Jeems," a heavily built and dangerous-looking but apparently not ill-natured person, remained beside the young man, with the bar of iron in his hand and his restless eyes wandering about the room, turning every few seconds to rest upon his prisoner.

The latter, as has been said, was tied down in just the position in which he had been sitting with his arms on the desk and his chin in his hands. Moreover, though he did not yet realize

it, his mouth was within a few inches of the telephone. He presently felt disposed to say something to the man behind him.

"This is a comfortable position for a man to be in," said he.

"Yer ought to be in a worse one," replied "Jeems" sympathetically.

And then, to Fred's sudden surprise and delight, from the mouth of the telephone, distinctly, yet so low that he himself barely caught the murmur of the words, came a sentence from Jennie Farwell.

"It's not particularly comfortable for me. If you don't pay better attention, and talk to me once in a while, I shall be to bed."

A sudden idea flashed like lightning through Fred's brain. He did not seem to be in a condition to interfere with the robbery himself—one man against three, and he tied fast to his chair; but he could tell Jennie and she could go to assistance. So, almost instantly he went on in answer to "Jeems'" remark.

"Perhaps I might," said he. "I doubt it, though. Just think of it! Hey?" he took his hand as though to speak, and spoke the rest of his sentence directly into the telephone, without the slightest pause or change of tone—"here I am tied down to my chair, with a man standing over me ready to knock me in the head if I utter a cry!"

"P'raps then," Jeems philosophically suggested, "p'raps you'd better not utter it."

Fred scarcely heard the words, however. His ear was at the telephone, and all his senses strained to catch a reply. None came, however. Jennie had not understood him; or, (more probably), was too much startled to answer immediately.

"Do you hear what I am saying?"

Fred asked the question of the telephone; and he asked the feeble, trembling: "I hear. What shall I do?" that came back before "Jeems'" gruff, base voice answered the same question, which he of course took to be intended for himself alone.

"Hear? Of course I hear. D'y'e spose I've got cotton in my ears?"

"Well, then," Fred slowly went on running over in his mind all the while how best to shape his sentence so as without exciting suspicion, to convey to Jennie what he wished to say. "Do you know what I would do if I were out of this I would," he then turned to the telephone again and delivered the rest of his sentence as before, sharply and distinctly into the receiver—"go straight to Jackson's—wake him up and tell him to bring help at once! There isn't a minute to spare!"

Fred fairly hissed the last words into the instrument—overcome by his anxiety to make Jennie understand, and for a moment quite forgetful of the man behind him. A low growl in his ear instantly recalled the latter's presence.

"Jeems" was eying him suspiciously.

"Look here, young feller, what are ye tryin' ter say? Anybody d' think?" Then he took a step forward, interrupting himself. "What is that thing yer talkin' inter?"

He stooped over and peered into the telephone.

Then again his eyes sought Fred's with an ugly expression.

"It looks like a bell or suthin'?" he thought.

"It's like a bell or suthin'?" he thought.

"I thought he was a good player," he said.

"I thought he was a good player," he said.

"I thought he was a good player," he said.

"I thought he was a good player," he said.

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